THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI E. AHAMMED): (a) Yes.

(b) Government of India is in close touch with the Government of Afghanistan to share our concerns on such incidents and to ensure full security for Indians working in Afghanistan. Asecurity advisory was issued by the Embassy of India, Kabul to all Indians and their companies working in Afghanistan soon after the killing of the BRO official in November 2005. Additional ITBP personnel have been deployed at the BRO's road project locations. Subsequently, the Embassy has held meetings with representatives of Indian companies to emphasise the need for observing security precautions strictly. All Indians working in Afghanistan are urged to register themselves with the Embassy of India, Kabul. Government of Afghanistan has deployed local police guards at the sites of Indian projects in Afghanistan. In addition, as and when required, additional security forces are provided for Indian nationals. In India, Government regularly reviews the security arrangements with concerned Ministries and agencies to ensure the safety of all Indian national in Afghanistan.

(c) There are approximately 2000 Indian nationals working in Afghanistan at present.

(d) to (f) The Government and people of India will never bow to acts of terrorism and will continue their fraternal assistance to the people of Afghanistan in their endeavours to bring peace, stability and economic recovery to their country ravaged by years of conflict.

Foreign visit of Prime Minister

3528. SHRI S. ANBALAGAN:
DR. MAM. RAMASWAMY:

Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Prime Minister had recently visited Germany and other countries;

(b) if so, the bilateral and multilateral issues that figured during the visit to each country and the outcome thereof;

(c) whether any agreements signed during the visit; and

(d) if so, the salient features thereof, agreement-wise?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI ANAND SHARMA): (a) Yes Sir, the Prime Minister visited Germany from April 22-25, 2006 and Uzbekistan from April 25-26, 2006.

(b) The discussions held with the leaders of Germany and Uzbekistan covered a wide range of areas of bilateral cooperation including economic and commercial links, S&T and education. Multilateral issues relating to UN Reforms were also discussed. This would promote greater cooperation between India and these countries in areas of mutual interest.

Joint Statements were issued at the end of both visits. The respective texts of the Joint Statements are enclosed as per Statement. (See Below)

(c) and (d) No bilateral inter-governmental agreements were signed during the visit. However, the following MoUs/commercial contracts were signed:

(i) MoU on cooperation in the field of biomedical sciences was signed between Indian Council of Medical Research and the Helmholtz Association of National Research Centres, Berlin. It endeavours to advance the development of research cooperation with initial focus on infectious diseases, oncology and biomedical research related to health.

(ii) MoU on cooperation in the field of Railways between Indian Railways and the Deutsche Bahn. It envisages technological cooperation including modernization, signalling and telecommunications."

(iii) Letter of Intent between Force Motors and Neoman Bus GmbH. It envisages joint ventrue for manufacture of buses002E

(iv) Contract between Kingfisher Airlines and Airbus. It envisages purchase of five aircrafts by Kingfisher Airlines from Airbus.

The following MoUs and Work Plans were signed during the visit to Uzbekistan:

(i) Memorandum of Understanding between the Government of

the Republic India and the Government of the Republic of Uzbekistan on establishing the Uzbekistan India Entrepreneurship Development Centre at Tashkent;

(ii) Memorandum of Understanding between the Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas of the Republic of India and the National Holding Company "Uzbekneftegaz" of the Republic of Uzbekistan on Cooperation in the field of Oil and Natural Gas;

(iii) Memorandum of Understanding of Cooperation between the Ministry of Coal and Mines of Republic of India and the State Committee of the Republic of Uzbekistan for Geology and Mineral Resources;

(iv) Memorandum of Cooperation between GAIL (India) Limited and Uzbekneftegaz;

(v) Work Plan for 2007 under the Memorandum of Understanding for Cooperation in the field of Agricultural Research and Education between the Department of Agricultural Research and Education of the Ministry of Agriculture of the Government of the Republic of India and the Ministry of Agriculture and Water Resources of the Government of the Republic of Uzbekistan;

(vi) Memorandum of Understanding between State Trading Corporation of India and O'zbekyengilsanoat State Joint Stock Company of Uzbekistan;

(vii) Memorandum of Understanding between Delhi University and Tashkent State Institute of Oriental Studies.

Statement

Germany-India Joint Statement issued on the occasion of the Visit of Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh to Germany 23/04/2006

Federal Chancellor Angela Merkel and Prime Minister Manmohan Singh today reaffirmed the Strategic Partnership of Germany and India. Building upon the 'Agenda for the Indo-German Partnership in the 21st Century', which both countries adopted in the year 2000, Germany and India will deepen their strategic partnership based on shared democratic values and basic common interests.

The Indo-German Strategic Partnership has seen co-operation intensifying across the board, including on the G4 initiative relating to the reform of the United Nations Security Council. Both sides agree to continue co-operation bilaterally and in the framework of G4 for the strengthening of the multilateral system and a reform of the United Nations, including the reform of the UN Security Council.

Trade, investment, scientific and technological collaboration, including in the areas of infrastructure, energy and high technology areas such as space, form an important basis for the partnership. Both sides aim to further deepen their strategic and security dialogue and will work towards an agreement on bilateral defence co-operation.

Economic and trade relations between Germany and India have flourished in recent years. India's participation as the Partner Country in this year's Hannover Messe reflects the growing interest in India as a global economic partner and offers an excellent opportunity to intensify bilateral economic ties, Infrastructure and Energy provide major areas of deepening engagement between the two countries. The Indo-German Joint Commission on Industrial and Economic Co-operation will continue to focus on specific areas of co-operation for mutual benefit. Both sides note with satisfaction that bilateral trade is growing rapidly and that the target of doubling the trade within five years, which was set at the previous Summit meeting in New Delhi in October 2004 is likely to be achieved much earlier. Both sides recognize the significant role of the small and medium enterprises in further promoting the trade, investment and technology links and agree to facilitate intensification of linkages of such enterprises. They also note with appreciation, the contribution of the Indo-German Chamber of Commerce, which is celebrating its 50th anniversary this year, to promote economic co-operation between the two countries. They welcome the opening of a German Trade Office in Bangalore, which will further promote German trade and investment in India. They also welcome the growing trend of Indian investments in Germany.

In this context both sides commend the work of the Indo-German Consultative Group and welcome their recommendations for further strengthening of our overall relationship including our economic and trade ties.

Both sides acknowledge the valuable contributions of Indo-German development co-operation in wide-ranging areas including energy, environmental policy, sustainable economic development, health and vocational training.

The establishment of an Indo-German Energy Forum at Senior Officials level and including the private sector highlights the importance accorded by both countries to co-operate in this sector. The Energy Forum will address strategic energy concerns including energy security, efficient use of energy, promotion of renewable energy sources and environmentally friendly technologies, taking into account the environmental challenges of sustainable development.

The two sides also take note of the satisfactory progress being made with regard to co-operation between the EU and India in the energy sector and the fact that the India-EU Joint Action Plan finalized in September 2005 at the 6th EU-lndia Summit in New Delhi, provides for co-operation on achieving safe, secure, affordable and sustainable energy supplies. India's participation in the ITER initiative on fusion energy is an important part of the ongoing energy co-operation.

Germany and India have established a long and fruitful co-operation in Science and Technology. The Indo-German Science Circle has given new impetus to this co-operation and will further strengthen contacts between scientific and academic communities. Both sides expect that the newly established office of the Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft in New Delhi will further add to the close network of institutions between our two countries. Both sides will work towards setting up an Indo-German Science, Research and Technology Centre at an early date. The Indian Council for Medical Research and the Helmohltz Association of German research centres are signing an MoU on Research Co-operation in the field of biomedical sciences.

Germany will place special emphasis on co-operation in Science and Technology between Germany and India during its Presidency of the European Union. Both sides will work towards jointly organizing a Ministerial conference on Science and Technology in the first half of 2007.

Both sides take a note of the ongoing bilateral co-operation in the space sector including in the Chandrayaan project. India's participation

in the Global Navigation Satellite System (GALILEO) will be an important contribution to such co-operation.

Both sides agree to continue close co-operation in the fight against terrorism, both through the regular bilateral consulations and co-operation in the multilateral context. In particular, they will continue co-operating in pursuing agreement in the UN on the Comprehensive Convention against International Terrorism. The two sides have also agreed to start negotiations on a Treaty on Mutual Legal Assistance in Criminal Matters aiming at early conclusion of such negotiations.

Both sides agree to actively promote our traditionally close cultural co-operation. India's participation as the focus country in the Bonn Biennial Art Festival in May and as the guest of Honour Country in this year's Frankfurt Book fair are important events to further deepen our cultural ties They welcome the decision of the Indian Council for Cultural Relations to set up five rotating chairs on Contemporary Indian Studies in various German universities.

Hannover
April 23, 2006.

Joint Statements

Ministry of External Affairs, New Delhi

Joint Statement by Republic of India and Republic of Uzbekistan, Visit of Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh to Uzbekistan.

26/04/2006

At the invitation of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan, H.E. Mr. Islam Karimov, the Prime Minister of India H.E. Dr. Manmohan Singh, paid an official visit to the Republic of Uzbekistan on 25-26 April 2006.

2. The Prime Minister of India Dr. Manmohan Singh held discussions with the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan Mr. Islam
Karimov. The talks were held in an atmosphere of friendship and trust.
The two Sides had detailed exchange of views on the issues of further development of bilateral relations in political, trade and economic, scientific and technical, cultural and humanitarian and other spheres of co-operation, as well as on regional and international issues of mutual interest.

3. The two sides positively assessed dynamic development of India/ Uzbekistan relations, reviewed in detail the follow up on decisions taken during the visit of the President of Uzbekistan to India in April 2005 and in this context noted the significant potential for further co-operation between the two Sides for the benefit of the peoples of two countries as well as peace and stability in the region.

4. Both sides agreed on the importance of maintaining regular political dialogue, including at the highest level on bilateral relations as well as on regional and international issues. The importance of grater contacts between the ministries, departments and economic entities of the two countries was emphasized The two Sides agreed to take active measures to promote people-to-people contacts.

5. Uzbekistan and India noted that there exist vast opportunities for the development of co-operation in the spheres of education, information technology, oil and gas sector, light industry, agriculture, aviation, tourism, entrepreneurship, mineral resources and pharmaceuticals.

6. The two Sides noted with satisfaction the signing of the following documents during the visit:

(i) Memorandum of Understanding between the Government of the Republic of India and the Government of the Republic of Uzbekistan on establishing the Uzbekistan India Entrepreneurship development Centre at Tashkent;

(ii) Memorandum of Understanding between the Ministry of Petroleum and Naturai Gas of the Republic of India and the National Holding Company "Uzbekneftegaz" of the Republic of Uzbekistan on Co-operation in the field of Oil and Natural Gas.

(iii) Memorandum of Understanding on Co-operation between the Ministry of Coal and Mines of Republic of India and the State Committee of the Republic of Uzbekistan for Geology and Mineral Resources;

(iv) Memorandum of Co-operation between GAIL (India) Limited and Uzbekneftegaz

(v) Work Plan for 2007 under the Memorandum of Understanding for Co-operation in the field of Agricultural Research and Education between the Department of Agricultural Research and Education of the Ministry of Agriculture of the Government of the Republic of India and the Ministry of Agriculture and Water Resources of the Government of the Republic of Uzbekistan;

(vi) Memorandum of Understanding between State Trading Corporation of India and O'zbekyengilsanoat State Joint Stock Company of Uzbekistan;

(vii) Memorandum of Understanding between Delhi University and Tashkent State Institute of Oriental Studies.

7. The Sides while recognizing the need to enhance the trade-economic and investment co-operation, agreed to facilitate contacts between the representatives of business circles of the two counties.

8. The Sides expressed satisfaction with the results of the Sixth meeting of the India-Uzbekistan Intergovernmental Commission on Trade, Economic, Scientific and Technological Co-operation held in New Delhi on 7 March 2006 and underlined the importance of early implementation of the provisions of the signed Protocol.

9. The Republic of Uzbekistan highly appreciates the inauguration of the Jawharlal Nehru Uzbekistan India Centre for Information Technology in Tashkent.

10. The Indian side offered to set up satellite based tele-eudcation and tele-medicine connectivity between India and Uzbekistan to strengthen co-operation in the area of communications and information technology. The Republic of Uzbekistan accepted with pleasure the Indian Offer.

11. The Sides noted with satisfaction the extension of Co-operation in the sphere of the personnel training within the framework of indian Technical and Economic Co-operation (ITEC) programme and other programmes. India offered an increase in the ITEC training slots for Uzbekistan from 100 to 120 from the current financial year. The sides have agreed to continue intensive interaction in this direction.

12. India offered to provide financial support to establish the Uzbekistan India Entrepreneurship Development Centre in Tashkent. Uzbekistan agreed to provide necessary support to facilitate the establishment of the Centre.

13. The Sides expressed confidence that the rich historical and cultural heritage of the two countries provides a strong foundation for enhancement of all round co-operation and intensification of contacts between scientists, teachers, students as well as artistic and creative personalities.

14. The Republic of Uzbekistan accepted with pleasure the offer of the Indian side to establish the Mahatma Gandhi Centre for Indian Studies at the Tashkent State Institute of Oriental Studies.

15. The two Sides noted the similarity or coincidence of their respective positions on major global and regional issues, Uzbekistan and India, while resolutely condemning international terrorism in all of its forms and manifestation, once against underlined their resolve, on a long term basis, to fight against terrorism, which is one of the most serious threats to intranational peace and security. In this regard, the two Sides emphasized the need for expeditious adoption of the Comprehensive Convention on International Terrorism within the framework of UN.

16. The two Sides expressed satisfaction with the results of the Second meeting of the Joint Working Group on combating International Terrorism held in October 2005 in New Delhi and expressed the intention to continue consultations between the corresponding authorities of both states with the aim of coordinating their anti-terrorist efforts.

17. The two Sides expressed their support for the efforts of the Government of Afghanistan to build a strong, united, prosperous and independent country.

18. Both Sides, while considering the current changes in global and regional level stressed the urgent need for reforms of structure and activity of the United Nations Organisation and enhancement of its efficiency in countering new threats and challenges, Uzbekistan once again reiterated its support to the permanent membership of the Republic of India in an expanded UN Security Council. India expressed its appreciation for Uzbekistan's support.

19. The Republic of Uzbekistan noted that the accession of India to the Shanghai Co-operation Organisation as an observer is an important factor in raising the importance of the Organisation and expansion in its abilities to impact positively on regional and global processes.

20. Both Sides shares the opinion that the intensification of co-operation within the framework of SCO in countering contemporary challenges would promote the development of effective mechanisms in strengthening regional security.

21. The two Sides noted with satisfaction that the discussions and meetings held in Tashkent have made an important contribution to the steady development of mutually beneficial — India-Uzbekistan cooperation, which would serve the causes of further strengthening traditionally friendly relations and multi-faceted co-operation between the two countries

22. The Prime Minister of the Republic of India H.E. Dr. Manmohan Singh invited the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan, HE. Mr. Islam Karimov to pay an official visit to the Republic of India. The invitation was accepted with pleasure. The dates of the visit would be decided through diplomatic channels.

Tashkent
26 April, 2006.

Relaxation in the visa policy

3529 KUMARI NIRMALA DESHPANDE: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state

(a) whether mspite of the continuing peace process between India and Pakistan there is no relaxation in the visa policy, which is the main road block in people to people contacts;

(b) whether the Ministry rs planning to give relaxation unilaterally to the senior citizens, who are keen to visit their birth place; and

(c) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI E. AHAMMED): (a) Government firmly believes that